
OFFICE OF PROPERTY MANAGEMENT

Status of the Consolidated Forensic Laboratory Project



Testimony of Lars Etzkorn
Director
Office of Property Management

Adrian M. Fenty
Mayor

COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC SAFETY AND THE JUDICIARY
Councilmember Phil Mendelson, Chairman

Tuesday, 29 May 2007

Council Chambers
John Wilson Building
1350 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW
Washington, DC 20004-3003
3:00 p.m.

Good day, Chairman Mendelson and members of the Committee on Public Safety and the Judiciary. I am Lars Etzkorn, Director of the Office of Property Management (OPM). I would like to thank you for this opportunity to present the status of the District's Consolidated Forensic Laboratory (CFL) project.

In my testimony today, I will outline the background of the CFL (needs and benefits), update you on the progress to date and discuss potential challenges. Let me start by acknowledging your foresight Chairman Mendelson in being an early champion of the CFL. And let me summarize my testimony to report that working collectively with all the involved District agencies we are on course. Construction completion and start of operations is scheduled for late 2011.

Background

The CFL is on schedule for a 240,000-square-foot building where the District will consolidate the functions of public safety forensic science and public health into a single world class, state-of-the-art facility. The new consolidated facility will co-locate portions of three departments: Metropolitan Police Department (MPD) forensic lab, Office of the Chief Medical Examiner, and Department of Health public health lab. The location is at 4th and Schools Streets, SW, in Ward 2, between Schools and E Streets and 4th and 6th Streets, SW.

The CFL is expected to realize significant District operational and space efficiencies, while enhancing the ability of the District to respond to future public safety and health challenges. The District's existing facilities, which the CFL replaces, are generally in poor conditions, undersized and inflexible to accommodate changing technology. In addition, the District's forensic science and investigative work currently depends heavily on outside sources including federal and neighboring jurisdiction states and counties. This creates chain and custody problems and lengthy delays in getting results.

Given these mission-critical components and their respected functions, the CFL will play a vital role in improving public safety, including our crime investigation capabilities, providing reliable facility to our law enforcement agencies to provide quality and timely information, and will provide a broad range of new safety and health services to our residents.

Progress

The Fenty Administration is committed to a new CFL. This commitment is evident in the progress achieved to date:

- **Finalized Site Selection:** As stated earlier in my testimony, the site is located on 4th and School Streets, SW, in Ward 2. After evaluating thirty potential sites, several factors went into the site selection criteria including proximity to MPD and DC Courts, District owned location, multiple street access points and an open site that allows minimum setbacks without compromising functionality of the facility.
- **Award A/E Contract, Commence Design Phase:** Design phase is fully underway with an Architect/Engineering firm (A/E), selected based on qualifications. The CFL schematic design (15% Design) is scheduled to be submitted in July 2007 with Design Development (65% design) completed by the end of this year. Other design related items completed to-date include:
 - Programming phase to define preliminary needs assessments, required square footage area and funding.
 - Threat assessment analysis.
 - 20% reduction of program space from 300,000 SF to 240,000 SF. This change is the result of refinement of the program needs as requirements were better understood and defined. Refinements of the program included combining similar administrative functions (conference rooms, restrooms, elevator lobbies, administrative support areas, etc.) to achieve efficiencies and economies of scale.

Other programming changes were driven by new technologies as well as the elimination of mitochondrial DNA testing from the original program. This reduction helped to "right size" the facility for better balance of service. The desire is to have a facility that performs the vital basic functions very well and outsource rarer tests because doing so internally is not cost-effective.

- Floor Area Ratio (FAR) Analysis. As the District owns the entire block there will be significant balance of the site (between 430,000 SF to 530,000 SF) available for development (the latter if a Planned Unit Development was approved). In the near term, the Deputy Mayor for Planning and Economic Development plans to issue a Request for Proposals to test market interest in joint development with the District. This process is separate and will not impact construction of CFL.
- Meet LEED Silver design requirements as mandated by Council for all new District buildings.
- **Develop User Groups and Commence User Meetings:** User groups were formed within each stakeholder agency to promote the program needs, to communicate the critical requirements for each group and to provide comment on the development of the design. The user groups continue to meet with the A/E firm.
- **Secured Majority of Funding:** Majority of the projected funding has been secured through \$160M in capital budget requests in FY05-FY10. The Federal government has contributed to-date a total of \$18M (the President's FY08 budget proposal includes an additional \$10M) and we anticipate further Federal contributions of \$30M for this project.
- **Assign Dedicated Project Team:** Due to the project's size and importance to public safety and health, we have augmented the staff that ably managed the development efforts to-date so there is a team dedicated solely to the CFL. The City Administrator has also assigned his

public safety program manger to address and assist in resolving any potential impediments.

Starting last fall, William Vosburgh has been leading the development effort for the scientific stakeholders. He brings experience and knowledge in both planning and operational areas that are essential to ensure a successful development that meets and supports the operational requirements and the projected advancements in forensic science. In addition, OPM is currently recruiting for a dedicated construction Project Manager to start by the end of June. This will create a strong team with specialized scientific and construction expertise.

Potential Challenges

- Any change in stakeholders' requirements could impact the project schedule. We have mitigated this possibility by involving the stakeholders in the design phase through the Users' Groups, as described earlier.
- Secure anticipated Federal funds for the project, which is at the top of the Fenty Administration's list of requests for Federal funding. A shortage of funding would delay the project dates as described earlier. OPM will continue to provide updates on the funding status of the program and will develop bid options within the construction contract to mitigate potential impacts of funding issues – shortages or timing of availability.
- Relocation of 1st District MPD. This action is on the project completion critical path. Final occupancy in part depends on the relocation of the 1st MPD District from the School Street site to 225 Virginia Ave, SE. First District relocation is required to be completed by first quarter 2009 to maintain the current CFL project completion schedule. I am pleased to report the program for the multi-use MPD facility is on schedule at 225 Virginia Ave. In fact, earlier today we sent to the developer approval of MPD's schematic layout. As you know, Council approval is required to amend the lease for 225 Virginal Avenue to have the developer finance

the improvements. Currently, we are negotiating the lease amendment for up to \$100M of improvements. We will keep this Committee informed if there are any material changes.

In conclusion, with this as with all our projects, OPM is committed to working with the Council. This is the first briefing on the CFL project and I expect there will be many more as the project continues. We look forward to working with you, Chairman Mendelson, to turn our shared vision into a facility we can be proud to have helped build.

I am pleased to answer any questions from the Committee.

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